



Gleanings

a monthly newsletter from The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

(articles and photos selected from Chapter newsletters, our journal GESNERIADS, and original sources)

Volume 2, Number 1

January 2011



Welcome to the latest issue of **Gleanings!** This issue includes photos from the Lonestar African Violet Council Flower Show, the herbarium at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Doris Brownlie on *Chirita* 'Cynthia', and Bob Stewart's thoughts on why mildew appears.

Hope you enjoy **Gleanings!**

Mel Grice, Editor



A Charles Lawn hybrid *Sinningia speciosa*

From Dale Martens – "Charles Lawn sent me this photo of his *Sinningia speciosa* 'Rainbow' hybrid in order to share it with you. Charles lives in Australia and over many years has won numerous Champion awards for his gesneriad entries at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The Gesneriad Hybridizer's Association has *Sinningia speciosa* hybrid seeds available that he's donated."



Gesneriads at the Lone Star African Violet Council Convention held in Kerrville, Texas, USA

photos courtesy of Dale Martens



Best in Show — *Saintpaulia* 'Tommie Lou'



Columnnea 'Jeanne Katzenstein'



Streptocarpus 'Alissa'



Streptocarpus 'Concord Blue'



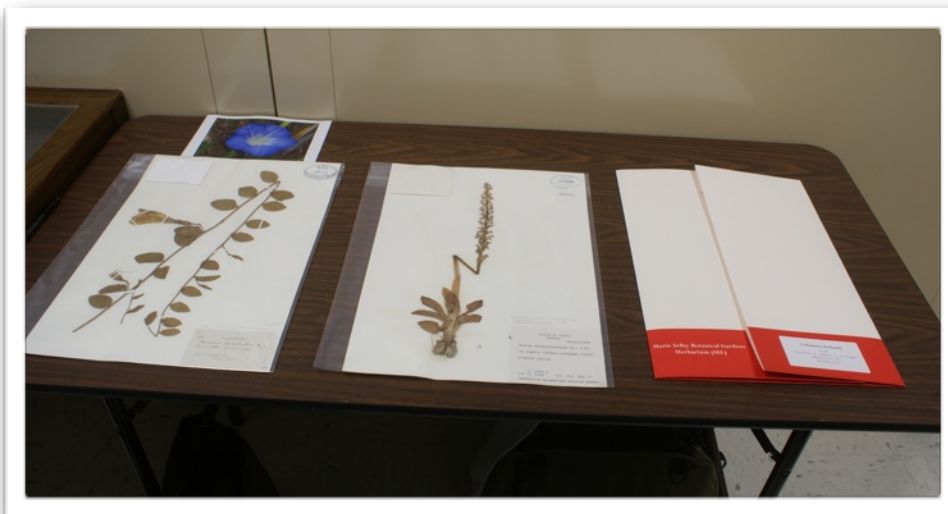
The Herbarium at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

The Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Sarasota, Florida, USA (est. 1973) has been involved with gesneriad research since its inception, as is evident from the Gardens' official seal that illustrates a bromeliad, an orchid, and a gesneriad. Dr. Hans Wiehler was the driving force behind Selby's early gesneriad program, helping to build the living and preserved collections during his tenure there. In 2002, Wiehler donated the several thousand herbarium specimens, liquid-preserved specimens and other resources of the Gesneriad Research Foundation (GRF) to Selby Gardens. A dedicated gesneriad research program was established to curate, manage and utilize the newly acquired gesneriad resources at Selby Gardens and to further the legacy established by Dr. Wiehler.

The Gesneriad Research Center at Selby Gardens has been funded through charitable contributions from individuals, an annual grant from The Gesneriad Society, Inc., and through competitive grants. Selby Gardens, while not directly funding the GRC, generously has provided essential overhead and space for GRC operations including office, lab, herbarium, and greenhouse.



Bruce Holst shows how herbarium specimens are maintained. Note the flower color still remains on the dried herbarium specimen seen below of a *Columnea* species collected by Hans Wiehler in the 1970's.

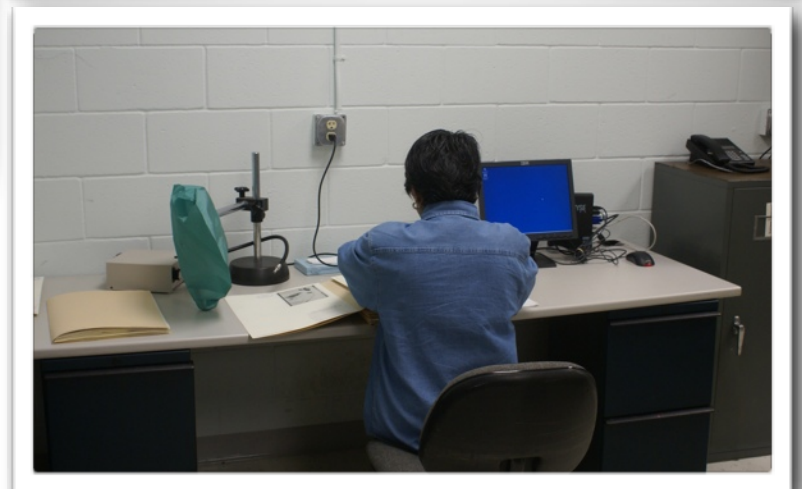




Numerous Selby volunteers preserve the dried herbarium specimens for future study.



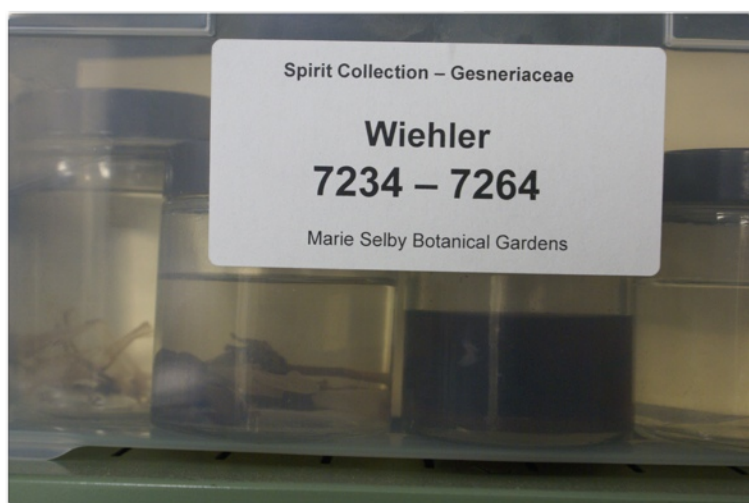
Jeremy Keene (above) received \$4,500 from **The Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund** (NDSSEF) to continue his work on *Gesneriaceae*. Mr. Keene is currently undertaking research for his Ph.D. degree at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. Jeremy's thesis topic is a revision of *Diastema* and *Monopyle*.



The Annual Appeal

The Gesneriad Society's Annual Appeal needs your help. A donation to the Elvin McDonald Research Endowment Fund will help fund the type of research you are reading about in this issue of **CLEANINGS**. A donation to the Nellie D. Sleeth Scholarship Endowment Fund will help a deserving student continue his or her studies involving gesneriads. Go to <http://www.gesneriadsociety.org/Donate/donatespecial.htm> to learn more.

Gesneriads collected in the field are preserved in alcohol for future study.



The Spirit Collection

Bruce Holst and some of the equipment available for gesneriad study.



Photos courtesy of Mel Grice

Chirita 'Cynthia'

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I first met *Chirita* 'Cynthia' when Vincent Woo brought it to enter in a convention show. He was so proud of his new hybrid that he named it after his beautiful mother. Vincent has travelled all over the world, but not with show plants, so, when he was going through airport security he did not place the box in a basket. On the way through the X-ray machine, the box turned over and one of the leaves broke off, completely destroying the symmetry. He kept the leaf in a glass of water and just before the show, sewed it onto the plant. I happened to be the clerk for the panel of judges the next morning. My heart was in my mouth, but my lips were sealed. They gave it a blue ribbon and it ended up being the best new introduction in the show.

Why does this plant cause a sensation wherever it goes? It is because the true *Chirita* 'Cynthia' is so scarce because it is difficult to propagate. The leaves either die or produce *Chirita* 'Kazu'. It is a variegated sport of *Chirita* 'Kazu' where each leaf has some white variegation. Some plants have a green edge on each leaf, some are completely mottled, green and white, but the original *Chirita* 'Cynthia' had each side of the leaf exactly half green with a wide white edge. I happen to have the good fortune of having one like that.

This is the third *Chirita* 'Cynthia' that I have owned. The first one was too variegated. It died from overwatering. The second one died from being in the wrong position on the shelf. With the third one I placed it on an upturned pot with the top leaves about 3" from the lights in the centre of the lights on a sheltered shelf. The lights are on 12 hours at night. It has been growing there for about 8 years. I never take it out to a show because I have seen *Chirita* 'Cynthia' immediately reach for light on the show table.



When the plant was young, it grew suckers. We were ecstatic although the leaves were all white. We waited for about 2 years for some green to appear on the leaves but, in spite of having roots, the little plants had no chlorophyll. We planted them anyway but they soon died. The only way to propagate more *Chirita* 'Cynthia' is to cut the centre out of the older plant, preserving it by

planting it with no roots and watering it carefully. On the bare centre of the rooted plant small plants will grow. When they are big enough, these plants are cut from the mother plant and planted with no roots in a small pot and watered very carefully until roots form. I have never done this. I can't bear to behead my beloved *Chirita* 'Cynthia'.

The leaves are still forming in a perfect pattern of coloration right on top of one another. When there are about 4 sets of leaves I replot the plant by removing 2 rows of leaves and cutting the tap root, filling in the top with fresh soil. I have her in a 4 1/2" pot because someone told me that *Chiritas* will stay small if you keep them in a small pot. That is true only to a certain extent. Right now I think a 5" azalea pot might be a good move. We water her every 4 days with lukewarm fertilized water. The fertilizer is usually Miracle-Gro 15-30-15.

Many people have admired my *Chirita* 'Cynthia', and you may too, but you will have to make an appointment to come and see her.



This article appeared in a slightly different form in the **Toronto Gesneriad Society Newsletter**, Vol. 35, No. 1, January 2011, Stan Sudol, editor.

Sinningia Name Changes Official

Dr. Alain Chautems is pleased to announce the following *Sinningia* names were validly published on December 9, 2010 in *Candollea* volume 65(2):

- Sinningia bullata* (previously *Sinningia* sp. "Florianopolis")
- Sinningia canastrensis* (previously *Sinningia* sp. "Canastra")
- Sinningia gertiana* (previously *Sinningia* sp. "Gertiana")
- Sinningia globulosa* (previously *Sinningia* sp. "Globulosa")
- Sinningia helioana* (previously *Sinningia* sp. "Santa Teresa")
- Sinningia muscicola* (previously *Sinningia* sp. "Rio das Pedras")
- Sinningia polyantha* (known as *Sinningia* sp. "Waechter" or previously "arenicola")

Some Thoughts On Why Mildew Appears

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Stow, Massachusetts, USA

Here is some speculation as to why mildew appears when you get a large temperature swing. My understanding is that many types of fungal spores require the presence of free water for a certain number of hours in order to germinate. Humidity can be very high in the thin layer of air immediately adjacent to a leaf surface. It can be much higher than in the general room air. The leaf is evaporating water through its pores, and this water moves away from the surface only gradually, by diffusion or by air currents. A sudden drop in air temperature can cause humidity to condense into water. Even very tiny droplets of water are large enough to germinate a spore. So there are some things that you could try as ways to reduce the chances of spores germinating.

If you water from above, do it early in the day, not late. That way the water has a chance to evaporate in the higher daytime temperature.

Lower the humidity of the room. This might reduce the chances of mildew, but it also is hard on the plants, so it is probably not a good idea.

Increase air movement at the leaf surface by adding fans. This will mix the humid air near the leaf surface with the room air more quickly.

Reduce the temperature swing, perhaps by adding supplemental heat after dark. Don't overdo it. Most plants do better if the dark period is significantly cooler than the light period.

Slow down the temperature swing. This gives the humid air more time to move away from the leaf surface before it gets too cool. One way to do this would be to put half the lights on a separate timer, set to turn off an hour later.



Powdery mildew on a seed pod of *Sinningia richii* 'Robson Lopes' (photo courtesy of Karyn Cichocki)

Originally posted on Gesneriphiles Internet Discussion Group. (Used by permission) Visit the Gesneriphiles website for instructions about joining the list: <http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/gesneriphiles>>

Convention 2011

The Gesneriad Society's
55th Annual Convention
Loews Philadelphia Hotel
1200 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA, USA
July 5-9, 2011

Hosted by the Liberty Bell Chapter





From the editor —

I just registered for the Philadelphia Convention on the Society's website www.gesneriadsociety.org It was quick and easy. Look for more about the convention in future issues.

Please continue sending photos and articles. If you have suggestions, comments, or items for possible inclusion in future issues, please feel free to contact me at editor.gleanings@gesneriadsociety.org.

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For additional information, contact: [<development@gesneriadsociety.org>](mailto:development@gesneriadsociety.org).

Membership and Changes of Address

The Gesneriad Society Membership Secretary, Bob Clark,
1122 East Pike Street, PMB 637, Seattle, WA 98122-3916 USA

Changes of Address — Send changes of address to the Membership Secretary [<membership@gesneriadsociety.org>](mailto:membership@gesneriadsociety.org) 90 days prior to moving to avoid missing an issue. The Society is not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late notification of address changes. Back issues may be ordered from The Gesneriad Society Publications.

Renewals — Send dues to the Membership Secretary. A Renewal Notice is sent two months prior to the expiration date of your membership. (The expiration date is printed on your mailing label/membership card on the back cover of GESNERIADS.) Please remit your dues prior to the expiration date to avoid missing an issue as we are not responsible for replacing issues missed because of late payment of dues. Back issues may be ordered from Publications.

Application for Membership — The Gesneriad Society, Inc.

WELCOME – membership in our international society includes quarterly issues of *GESNERIADS* – *The Journal for Gesneriad Growers*, a copy of *How to Know and Grow Gesneriads*, a packet of gesneriad seeds and a wealth of information about our Chapters, Flower Shows, Publications, Research, Slide Programs and Seed Fund. Membership begins upon receipt of dues.

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Frances Batcheller Endowment Fund Convention Speakers Fund Gesneriad Research Center Fund

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